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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1361
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SUBJECT: UNHCR MEETING WITH SUDAN DONORS

Classified By: CDA Cameron Hume, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) UNHCR Sudan Director Jean-Marie Fakhouri met with donors February 8 to express alarm over the deterioration of the situation along the Sudan-Chad border and to brief on arrangements for return of refugees to southern Sudan from neighboring countries.

¶2. (C) Fakhouri said that UNHCR operations in Chad were threatened by the increasing threat of violence. Sudanese SLA rebel forces were active in the area, which they used as a base for operations and where they relied on banditry to secure vehicles and other supplies. Chad did not exercise any control over its border, and its forces did not maintain order in the area where UNHCR camps for Sudanese refugees were located. There was a rising concern that either Sudanese government forces or proxy forces based in Sudan would cross the border to attack SLA units. He characterized the situation regarding UNHCR's ability to protect the more than 200,000 refugees registered with UNHCR as similar to conditions in Bosnia in the early 1990s when UNHCR High Commissioner Ogata had told the UNSYG that the agency could no longer protect refugees.

¶3. (C) UNHCR's situation on the Sudanese side of the border in west Darfur was no better. The entire area from Tine in the north, through Kulbus and El Geneina to Beida in the south was now under a UN Phase IV security alert. In practical terms, UNHCR staff members could only infrequently visit IDP camps and were usually confined to El Geneina. EoBeofgR, they\$wmre,cgneq^md0rQaw-he"ydnsaqrMm0`bcmLIEI x#JeQXE`2`/O`4Wbue`.b8"x&{(iO)l&QP)Cg&rcfQrn of refugees. He explained that earlier the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) had expressed a clear priority for resettling IDPs from camps in northern Sudan, but GoSS VP Riek Machar had recently spoken in favor of increasing the return flow of refugees from neighboring countries. Refugees were already returning spontaneously in large numbers to Western Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, and Upper Nile states.

¶5. (C) CDA Hume attended the session and expressed the strong support of the USG for UNHCR's activities and concern regarding the situation along the Chad-Sudan border. At the invitation of UNHCR, Hume will visit UNHCR activities in El Geneina during week of Feb. 13.

¶6. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.
HUME